# The Inconveniencies of Toleration,

OR

# AN ANSWER

To a late Book, Intituled.

# A PROPOSITION

Made to the

# KING AND PARLIAMENT.

FOR THE SAFETY and HAPPINESS OF THE *KING* and *KINGDOM.*

*In those days there was no King in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* JUDG. 17. 6.

*LONDON*,
Printed, for *Blanch Pawlet*, at the sign of the Bible in *Chancery-Lane*. 1683.

BRITISH MUSEUM

# *Inconveniencies of* TOLERATION, &c.

LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE is a Thing which hath often made a very Great Noise in the World; and is at the first View, a thing highly plausible; but although it looks hugely pretty in the Notion: yet it was alwayes found strangely Wild and Unmanageable when ever it came to be handled by Experience; and we shall constantly find, That those which cryed it up for the most Reasonable Thing in the world, when Themselves stood in need of it, as soon as ever They came in Power, would never endure to hear of it any longer. They who plead for it for Themselves, do not use to allow it to others; it hath always been so unlucky, as soon as ever it hath succeeded, to be laid aside.

Now Liberty of Conscience is either Absolute, and Universal, or Limited and Restrained: if Universal and Absolute, it layeth us open to all the folly and phrenzy imaginable, to all those Heresies which the Scripture calls Damnable, and is a publick Invitation to all sorts of strong Delusions, and the believing of Lyes, which St. *Paul* cautions us so much against, 2 *Thes.* 2. 10, 11. And in *Rev.* 2. 14 15. the Church of *Pergamus* is charged not with holding Errors Her Self, but tolerating Them in Others. Her guilt was, That She had among Her, Those who held the Doctrine of *Balaam* and the *Nicolaitans.*

But if it be Limited and Restrained: Then it is no longer Liberty of Conscience; but there is a clear Confession, That Conscience is not so Sacred a Thing, but it ought to have Limits and Restraints set upon it. If it be asked, Will you force men to go against their Consciences? I answer, That Consciences may be such, that men ought not to be suffered to act according to them. The Scripture tells us of

*Seared Conſciences, Reprobate Minds*; and Thoſe *whoſe very Mind and Conſcience is defiled*; So that Conſcience alone is no ſufficient Juſtification; Conſcience hath its Rule, may ſwerve, and ought very well to be looked to. I know that no man ought to act againſt his Mind or Perſwaſion; But I know withall, That there ought great care to be taken, what Minds and Perſwaſions men are of. Thus much I thought fit to premize, Becauſe that the Cauſe is thought ſufficiently pleaded, as ſoon as ever it can be alledged, This is our Conſcience: For it may be your Conſcience and your Crime too.

THe Firſt Thing which I ſhall obſerve in this Treatiſe, which pretends to ſo much Peace, Good Will and Moderation, is the *Time* of its coming out, and that was the Time of an Invaſion: Was this a Time to rip up and aggravate Diſcontents at Home, when we were ſet upon with a Powerful Enemy from abroad? Who but a *Dutch* man would have gone about to have affrighted the Credulous Vulgar, with this Canting Diſmal Strain? p. 86. *There are I perceive many Fears and Hopes upon the Minds of People, and the Preſages of their Hearts are many: I know not whether there be any dark notices from ſome Spirits that preſide over us, of ſome great Events, ſometimes when they are near us: But methinks the Minds of ſome have of late aboaded ſome very* GREAT EVIL, *or Great Good not to be far from us*, &c. He who at ſuch a time, Proclaims the Fears of the Nation, Intended ſure to make them fear much more: This way of divulging ſuch Melancholy *Omens*, could have no end, but to diſhearten our People, or to inflame them. I could not, me thoughts, paſs by this Obſervation; becauſe it was one Sad Inſtance, That the *Puritan* Spirit hath not at all altered his old way of Acting; For ſo did their Forefathers in 88 try how far they could terrifie the State at that Time, becauſe it was a Time of great Danger.

a *Ut externo bello, ita etiam interno Schiſmate hoc tempore laboravit Anglia (ſchiſmatica enim pravitas ſemper bello ardente maxime luxuriat) Nec certe contumax in Eccleſiaſticos magiſtratus impudentia, & contumelioſa improbitas inſolentius alias ſe exercuit.* Camb. Eliz. p. 497.

a *England* at this Time did labour not onely with a War Abroad, but with Schiſm at Home: For Schiſmatical Pravity never fails to add a New Combuſtion to the heat of War; The Contumacy, Impudence, and Contumelies of theſe Men did never ſhew it ſelf with greater Inſolence. *Cambd. Eliz.* p. 497. in *Editione Lond.* MDCXV.

They perſumed upon the neceſſities of the State; then they thought they might propoſe and rail at pleaſure, becauſe the Queens Hands were

were ſufficiently full of other buſineſs; Then came out *Mar-prelate*, *Diotrephes*, the *Demonſtration*, *&c.* Thus they uſe their Native Countrey as *Simeon* and *Levi* did the *Sichemites*, as ſoon as they were *ſore*, then not fail to fall upon Them. If ever the State lies under a Diſadvantage, Theſe will not fail to help on the Diſturbance.

But from the time of the Publication, proceed we to the Book it ſelf; The Firſt Thing we find Obſervable is *p.* 9, 10, 11.

*THere is a company of People about Us in the Countrey, &c. The moſt of them are certainly Inoffenſive Perſons, and there is no more againſt Them, than* Pliny *had againſt the Chriſtians; that They meet and Preach and Pray together, &c.*

How harmleſs, or Inoffenſive They may ſeem to You, we know not: But This, nor our Neighbour Nation, hath not found Them to be ſuch Tame and Modeſt Things: The Time hath been Known, when They *could devour Widows Houſes*, as well as for a pretence *make long Prayers*.

Our Charity prompts us to hope, that there are amongſt This Sect ſeveral good and well meaning People, and ſuch which of themſelves would be very harmleſs and inoffenſive; yet, Law makers ought to conſider not only what People are, or would be of Themſelves, but what uſe others are like to make of them: It is no News for Men to be made the Inſtruments of a Deſign, and yet to know nothing of it; to be the great Engines of ſuch buſineſſes, which had they ſeen thorough Them, They would have dyed, rather than to have any thing to do with: We are therefore not only to conſider the People who meet there, but who they are, which have the Managing of ſuch Meetings; as ſuppoſe now that the *ſeparated* Congregations ſhould think thoſe men the fitteſt to be Their Guides, who led them on to the late War; That the chief ſpeakers there ſhould be the Abetters and Applauders of the Murther of the *King*. And theſe amongſt Them who are of their own Nature the moſt harmleſs and Inoffenſive, are the moſt likely there to be impoſed upon: It is therefore the greateſt Kindneſs of Government toward ſuch Innocent Men, not to permit the Subtle and Malicious, to make a Prey of Them, and abuſe their Credulity to be the Inſtrument of Their Teachers Contrivances. And whereas it is here ſaid, that They *Meet only to Preach and Pray together*: It ought to be conſidered that we could repeat ſtrange Things, which have been ſaid in *Prayers* and *Sermons*; neither are we ſure that They meet only to do that: we Know, that there

may be, and do verily believe, that there is a quite other use of such Assemblies, *viz.* "To Form and to Know a Party, to Communicate "Intelligence and Discontents, to have a Plausible and Unperceivable "way of scattering abroad among the whole Nation, all sorts of little "and Malicious stories. There is no such Dangerous way of Libelling, "as that which is vulgarly called a good Gift in Prayer.

THe next Thing observable is *p.*13. *I wonder really in whose shops They have bought their Spectacles, that They can see this great Thing Unity of Folks Spirits, in Uniformity*, &c.

Surely Uniformity doth of all Things in the World look most like to Unity: And *St. Paul* recommends it to us upon this very score; *That we all speak the same things*, being with Him a very great Evidence, *That there are no Divisions amongst Us*. But because the The credit of these *Glasses* wherein we perswade our selves, That we see clearly Unity in Uniformity, doth it seems depend very much upon the Shop they came out of: We shal gratifie our Author so far, as to let Him Know whence we had Them; and to go no further, We were Advised, in the making and using of this sort of *Glasses* by one who we are sure, will not be denyed to be a most Skilful Work-man in such like Affairs; even the Non-conformists entirely beloved *Mr. Calvin* in his *Epist. ad Protectorem Angliæ*, where we have Him expressing his judgment clearly and fully for Uniformity in all its Parts, and utmost Extent of it. "It is fit (saith he) to take great heed of the desultory wits, *i. e.* The light giddy heady People, who desire for themselves too boundless a Liberty; the Gate is also to be shut against curious, *i. e.* new fangled Doctrines.

*Expedit quidem prospicere desultoriis ingeniis quæ sibi nimium licere volunt, claudenda est etiam janua curiosis doctrinis.*

But How is this, think You, to be done, by Liberty of Conscience? no, but by a more sober way. "And for This, there is but one ready and "assured way: If there be some one Form of Doctrin received of all, "which in their Preaching all should follow, to which also all the Bi"shops and the Parish Priests should by Oath be bound; and that no "man should be admitted to any Ecclesiastical Benefice, unless he pro"mised that That consent of Doctrin should be to him Inviolable.

b *Ratio autem expedita ad eam rem una est, si exiet summa quædam doctrinæ ab omnibus recipi, quam inter prædicandum sequantur omnes, ad quam etiam observandam Omnes Episcopi & Parochi jurejurando astringantur, si nemo ad munus Ecclesiasticum admittatur, nisi spondeat sibi illum doctrinæ Consensum inviolatum futurum.*

Here we have Him clear and expres, full and home for Uniformity so far

far as Doctrin reacheth. But Secondly, He is as clear for Uniformity in Prayers, and the Rites and Ceremonies thereof.

" As to the Form of Prayers and Rites Eccleſiaſtical, I do very much " approve, that there be one certain One, partly to provide againſt the " ſimplicity and idleneſs of ſome, and partly to Demonſtrate the agree- " ment of our Churches between themſelves, and Laſtly to provide " againſt the deſultory Levity of thoſe men who are alwaies affecting " Novelties.

*Quod ad formulam Precum & Rituum Eccleſiaſticorum, valde probo ut Certa illa extent a quâ Paſtoribus* Diſcedere *in functione ſuâ* Non Liceat, *tum ut conſulatur quorundam ſimplicitati & inertiæ, Tum ut certò conſtet* Omnium Eccleſiarum *inter ſe* Conſenſus, *Poſtremò etiam ut obviam eatur deſultoriæ quorundam levitati qui novationes quaſdam affectant*, p. 68, 69, &c.

The Second of theſe Reaſons comes home to what our Author makes ſuch a Wonder of, *viz.* That Uniformity is a great Degree and Evidence of our Unity: And we are told a little before in the ſame Epiſtle that there are a ſort of ſeditious People in *England*, which all Authority is highly concerned to provide againſt, and He Deſcribes them Thus, " There are (ſaith he) ſome Brain-ſick People in *England*, who " under the pretence of the Goſpel, bring in all ſorts of diſorder. And his ſentence is very Peremptory concerning them; that They ought, " To be reſtrained by the Avenging Sword.

*Cerebro ſi quidam qui ſub Evangelii nomine ἀταξίαν paſſim inveſtam vellunt. Ultore gladio coerceri*, &c.

Now who theſe People are, who are complained of, as the deſtroyers of all order, is not ſurely hard to be conceived: They are the Deſtroyers of all order, who refuſe to be under any, who will own the obligation of no Law (as to theſe Externals wherein order alone can have any place) but take it very ill; that they are not left wholly and altogether to their own Humour and Capriciouſneſs, or what ever elſe it is poſſible for them to miſtake for, or to pretend to be their Conſcience. And now if we think that Uniformity looks like Unity, we hope the Glaſſes which we ſee this thorough, will be no longer derided, when we conſider in whoſe ſhops we found them expoſed to our open view, and we our ſelves were particularly called upon by the chief Artificer, to make uſe of Them for this very particular purpoſe and occaſion.

But that Uniformity is a Thing highly to be deſired, and by all poſſible means to be endeavoured after and procured, Is a Thing which I ſuppoſe will not be denyed by that Party which is here chiefly pleaded for; Becauſe that they have with Hands lifted up to Heaven, ſworn Themſelves, and not only ſo, but with all manner of Art and Violence, did perſwade and force every one they had Intereſt in, or

Power.

Power over, to Swear with them; *That they would endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the Three Kingdomes, to the neareſt Conjunction and* UNIFORMITY *in Religion, Confeſſion of Faith, Form of Church-Government, Directory for Worſhip and Catechiſing.* See the Firſt Article of the Covenant.

We have One Argument more for Uniformity, and that is, The Horrible Diviſions which we have ſeen to ariſe for the want of it; and here we appeal to the Sober Part of our Adverſaries, who when time was, made great Complaints of this very Thing, the ſight of the hideous Hereſies, Schiſms and Scandals, which did immediately ariſe among Themſelves, did make them cry out mightily to their *Rulers* for a Law, to ſet bounds to the Conſciences of their own Brethren. Liberty of Conſcience is ſo wild a Spirit, as no Circle will keep in order: And to ſpeak the Truth, it is a Contradiction to own that pretence, and then to offer to ſet any Bounds unto it.

But to draw towards a Concluſion of this Argument, we do verily believe, That Uniformity if it were carefully maintained, and diligently looked after, would in a few years recall our Ancient Unity; The People would quickly forget all theſe Fantaſies, if it were not for theſe ſmall *Lerites* which are perpetually buzzing them into their ears; We ſhould quickly ſee, that the People would come to the Churches, if there were not ſo many Conventicles to keep them thence; and if they were but uſed for a little while to come thither, they would not find the Liturgy to be ſuch a fearful Idol, as they have been often told of: And I durſt confidently ſay, That if a Tryal were made in any gathered Church about the Town, and many of our Prayers were there repeated *memoriter*, that that man would be accounted one of great Gifts that could pray ſo ſweetly: It is nothing but unacquaintedneſs which makes them lyable to be ſo ſcared, with all thoſe terrible and groundleſs Stories. And I here durſt boldly appeal to Thouſands, who have ſince the Kings Return, gone once or twice to hear the Common-Prayer out of Curioſity, and have gone ever after out of Conſcience; and have much wondered at and deſpiſed their own credulity, in that they were ever brought to entertain ſuch hard jealouſies of ſo harmleſs a Thing.

BUt we are told in the next place, That to make Laws in Religious Matters eſpecially, (and by the ſame Rule in every thing elſe) is a thing, to ſay no more, perfectly inſignificant and abſolutely uſeleſs, For, *It is a Principle of a ſerious tender Chriſtian, that he would not do*

any

*any thing for fear, which he would not out of Conſcience*, i. e. As theſe words muſt ſignifie in this place, he will do no more for the ſake of the Law, than he would have done without it: *And it is a deadly Temptation againſt the preſent Injunctions, that they have a penalty annexed to them.*

Did ever any hear of a Law without a Penalty? was ever an Injunction drawn up in this form? Theſe things we do enjoyn you to do; and if you do them, it ſhall be to you the ſame thing as if you let them alone. If the Church hath power to command us any thing, we need go no farther than common ſenſe to infer; That ſhe hath power to puniſh, if that be not done which is commanded; and now that the Church hath power to make Injunctions of this nature, We have evidence enough from the Scripture it ſelf, where we find our Saviour ſo far owning this Authority, as that he ſubmitted to it: The Feaſt of the Dedication was of Inſtitution purely humane, and yet our Lord obſerved it; *John* 10. 22. Nay farther, our Saviour did not onely obſerve humane Inſtitutions, where there was no particular command in Scripture for them; but he alſo did obſerve ſuch as were in outward Circumſtances, quite different from what the Scripture hath appointed them to be in. If this ſeem ſtrange to us, let us look into *Exod.* 12. 11. where we find the very manner of eating the Paſsover plainly preſcribed to us, to be done in a ſtanding-Poſture, and that with all the punctual Formality, of their Loyns girt, Shooes on their Feet, and Staves in their Hands. Now our Saviour eats it quite otherwiſe, in a Table-poſture leaning, without Loyns girt, Shoos on his Feet, or Staff in his Hand, in perfect compliance with the Uniform practiſe of that age he lived in.

And that all good Order and Authority was not buryed with the Synagogue, is apparent from St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 10. *Let all things be done decently and in order.* Upon which *Calvin*: "This which St. *Paul* "here requires, cannot be had, unleſs ſome Conſtitutions (like "Bonds) be added, by which Order and Decorum may be ob- "ſerved.

*Non poteſt haberi quod Paulus hic exigit niſi additis Conſtitutionibus tanquam Vinculis, quibus ipſe Ordo & Decorum ſervetur.*

And *Melanthon* in his common places, *Cap. de politiâ Eccleſiaſt.* throughout: "Take away the Obligation of humane Ordinances, "Men cannot be governed or reſtrained; So that let us aſſure our "ſelves, that take away the Ordinances of the Church, and the Church "it ſelf is in danger.

*Nec regi nec coerceri homines poſſunt &c. Ita ſciamus Diſſipatis Ordinationibus Eccleſiaſticis periclitari etiam Eccleſiam.*

Add

*Ipſam vitam ac naturam hominum intuemur, quæ non poteſt carere Ceremoniis & ritibus, ut ſæpe jam dictum eſt.*

Add in the cloſe of that Argument, "Let us look but into humane "Nature, and Man-kind's way of living, and we ſhall find that it can-"not want Ceremonies.

But why do we mention particular Perſons? when if there were occaſion to multiply words in ſo clear a caſe, we have the joint confeſſion of all the Reformed Churches; and he who pleaſeth to look into the Harmony of Confeſſions, may ſatisfie himſelf at leiſure: We ſhall onely mention the *Bohemian*, becauſe it carries its reaſon along with it. C. 8. *Sect.* 10. *P.* 12.

*Docent etiam adminiſtrationis conſtitutionem & ordinem certum in Sacrâ Eccleſia præſtandum eſſe; Abſq; enim Ordinis Conſtitutione & Adminiſtratione externa, non poteſt bono loco eſſe, aut bene cum ipſa agi, ſicut & cum nulla alia etiam minima communitate.*

"They do teach likewiſe, That there ought to be a ſet-Conſtituti-"on, and a certain Order of Adminiſtration in the Holy Church; For "without a Conſtitution and an outward Adminiſtration for Order, "it cannot poſſibly go well with the Church, as with no other, no not "the leaſt Community.

But now ſuppoſe the Church make theſe Laws, how if Inferiors will not obey them? For that Mr. *Calvin* ſhall be their Judge in his Epiſtle to *Farel* p. 9. "This hath always obtained in the Church, which hath *Semper hoc in Eccleſia valuit quod veteribus Synodis fuit decretum, ut qui Subjici communi Diſciplinæ legibus noluerit* MUNERE ABDICETUR. "alſo been decreed by the ancient Synods, that he who will not be ſub-"ject to the Laws of the publick Diſcipline, ſhould be put out of his "Office and Employment.

Having now upon theſe ſeveral, and we hope convincing Grounds, ſhewed, that the Church ſhould have a power of commanding, and conſequently, of Impoſing Penalties in caſe of Diſobedience: We ſhall a little return and take ſome ſmall notice of the firſt ground of this his Argument.

*That a tender Chriſtian will not do any thing for fear, which he would not out of Conſcience.*

If this be intended to repreſent the Gallantry of that Party, which is here pleaded for; as being a company of Heroick Spi-

rits,

rits, as that they may be perſwaded or encouraged, but are at no hand to be frighted into any thing: We ſhall then ſay, that we never yet ſaw reaſon to believe that they were perſons of ſuch great bravery and reſolution: We have heard indeed by one who knew them well (King *James*) *That no Deſerts would oblige them, nor no Oaths bind them*; but we never yet heard, but they were as liable to be terrified as any other Mortals. We ſuppoſe that Mr. *Love* may well paſs for one of theſe ſerious and tender Chriſtians, and yet Fear prevailed ſo far upon him, as to make him acknowledg his great Guilt and unfeigned Sorrow for his great Offence; and own thoſe whom he conſpired againſt, as the Supreme Authority, and promiſe all manner of Duty and Submiſſion, in hopes of a Reprieve; and that this was not altogether Conſcience, appears, in that when they would Reprieve him no longer, he called them Rebels and Traitors. Once again, Mr. *Jenkins* too, did recant then; and we are more ſure that he did comply then, out of the principle of Fear, than we are that his not-Conforming now, proceeds purely out of a principle of Conſcience. Nay, did not that whole Party lay aſide all mention of the Covenant from Mr. *Love*'s death, till juſt upon the King's Reſtauration? Now I ſuppoſe Fear had ſome influence upon them in this, as well as Conſcience. The truth of it is, they are like Spaniels, if they ſeem to love any, it is after they have been ſoundly beaten; or rather, they are of the baſeſt of all Diſpoſitions, who really love no body, but yet will cringe and fawn upon any one, ſo long as they are afraid of him. And if this be the character of a tender Chriſtian, to do nothing for fear; ſure we are, that the tender Chriſtian is (of all places) the moſt unlikely to be found amongſt thoſe who talk ſo much of having tender Conſciences.

IN purſuance of the former Argument, we are told, p. 14. That, *if in lieu of propoſing ſuch a piece of Baniſhment to fright the Nonconformiſts into the late Oath enjoyned in the Act at* Oxford, *there had been offered a Liberty of the Miniſtry, on that Condition, without any Penalty, the Act had been perhaps to purpoſe.*

It is to me not a little wonder, that any one who hath but the face of a man, can pretend to complain, as if there had been any ſeverity in enjoyning the Oath made at *Oxford*: And to ſatisfie any, whether that which is here called Baniſhment, (*i.e.* removal five miles from a Corporation) be a Puniſhment any thing leſs neceſſary for the refuſing that Oath, there will be little requiſite beſides conſulting the Oath, which follows in theſe words, *viz.*

I A. B. *do swear, That it is not lawful on any pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the* King; *and that I do abhor that Trayterous position, of taking Arms by His Authority against His Person, or against those who are Commissionated by Him, in pursuance of such Commissions; and that I will not at any time endeavour any Alteration of Government either in Church or State.*

Now it is clear, that this Oath is not an Ecclesiastical, but a Civil Oath, made purely for the safety of the *King*'s Person and Authority, and was, with some addition, in force before; and being refused, the pretence was not any thing of Disloyalty, (no, the time was not come to profess that) but because there was in it a clause for the Renouncing of the *Covenant*: The *Parliament* therefore being willing to comply, not only with their infirmity, but with their very peevishness, contrived the substance of the former Oath without that clause in it, only binding them to profess, That it was not lawful to bear Arms, &c. *ut supra.* Now the refusal of such an Oath as this, wherein they are only required to swear, That they will not serve this *King* as they did his *Father*; One would think were Confiscation of goods, perpetual Imprisonment, or Banishment, in the proper sense of that Word, when lo, it is nothing but the being removed five Miles from a Corporation. They who will not promise, not to subvert the Government, shall have the whole Protection of It, with this only Caution taken against them, That they shall not live in such populous places, where they may have Opportunity to seduce great Numbers every day, to those Attempts which they will not be brought so much as to profess for to disclaim. And yet even this is not exacted, as those who walk *London* Streets, know well enough; and now where there is so direct, so reasonable, and withal, so Merciful a Law; One would think, that instead of complaining, they should rather express their Gratitude towards the *King* for his so wonderful, I had almost said so Groundless an Indulgence, in not putting in execution this Act, which is so great a piece of his own security, as it is a restraint upon those who will not so much as Engage themselves, not to Destroy him and his Government.

THE next, p. 15, is a Project of our Author's against his own Brethren; and that is, to serve them *as Julian did the Primitive Christians, to keep them out of every Office and Employment.* And

I ſhall thus far yeild to his Advice, as to acknowledg, that if it were carefully followed, we ſhould quickly ſee that it would have a very good effect. But we muſt add, that he hath put a very odd *Compliment* upon His Majeſty and the Parliament in thus repreſenting Them to be worſe than *Julian*.

BUt the next, p. 17, is infinitely more inexcuſable; he doth there tell us how *the King of Japan firſt put to death every man who was a Chriſtian: This not ſerving the turn, he executed the whole Family where any Chriſtian was harbour'd: This not doing it neither, he commanded that both that Houſe where any Chriſtian was found, and the next two Houſes on both ſides of it, ſhould be all put to execution.*

And now when he did reaſonably ſuppoſe, that every one who reads this diſmal paſſage, had his heart full of horror and deteſtation at this ſo barbarous and unexampled inhumanity, he moſt ſpitefully inferrs, That this is the courſe which he and his are to expect likewiſe.

*LAy that right hand on your breaſt, weigh what I ſay; You muſt either come to This, if you ſee to the end, or you muſt come to an Accommodation.*

Have theſe men already forgot how their Lives were (by the plain *Known Laws* of the Land) every one forfeit to His *Majeſty*? And how earneſt the *King* was to paſs the *Act* of *Indemnity*: How Religious he hath been in obſerving it? And when themſelves find the Government ſo mild, as they by this ſort of ſcribling dare ſhow how little they are afraid of it; ſee what manner of returns they make. Ought not now ſome other courſe beſides Mildneſs, be taken with them, who ſhall thus dare to *Allarum* the *Nation*, that if he and his have not their Wills, there is approaching the moſt horrid Tyranny which ever the Sun ſaw? I dare confidently ſay, That however theſe Jealouſies may promiſe their Deſign, in inflaming the people; yet themſelves do not in the leaſt believe, that ever ſuch Rigour is intended toward them: and if they were more afraid, they would not complain half ſo much.

Hitherto we have had little but *Lamentations* and *Complainings*, that there are in general, *Laws* and *Injunctions* which they cannot away with.

BUT now, p. 18. We are plainly told what there is in those Laws which doth so much offend them: First, negatively; *It is not the Dignity of the Bishops, their Lordships and Revenues; It is not their Cathedrals, Organs, and their Divine Service, in what State and Magnificence they please: It is not Common-Prayer, no nor any Ceremony of the Church, for all its significancy, if it be but a Circumstance of Worship, and no more, that could hinder most of the judicious and sober* Nonconformists *to come over to you*, &c.

These things it seems are Lawful, and they can come over to them: It were to be wished that they would instruct their Proselytes but thus much as they here openly profess, and not for ever infuse dismal jealousies into the heads and hearts of the people, against those things which themselves own so perfectly innocent, and what they can at any time come over to: But hath not the irresistible evidence of Truth, here forced them to give up at once no less then their whole Cause, or at least, to take away all manner of colour from it? For seeing that these things are all innocent, What one thing can there possibly be alledged to create any longer scruple?

Here is a clear Confession, That these men are guilty of the most unreasonable *Schism* that ever was, or ever can be in the World, because it is such a *Schism* which is in their own judgments utterly without any reason; For there is not any thing required, but what they here profess that they can come over to: The Church exacts Conformity to nothing but what the very Dissenters acknowledg that all the sober and judicious men among them can come over to. But are these men to be esteemed, or *Sober*, or *Judicious*, which stand out in so causless a *Schism*? which keep up so needless a *Separation*, and divide (not to say the Church, but) their Native Country, by refusing to do such things which they *know* and *own*, that they may do, and do them very unlawfully.

But if these things do not keep them out, what doth? For these are all the things which the Dispute lies about; Why? *It is these Declarations, Subscriptions, and Oaths, which you impose upon them*, &c.

If the former doth not hinder, I see no reason why this latter should; For, if we may do such a thing, why may we not *declare* that we will do it? If we do believe these things, why may we not *Subscribe* to them? And what is the harm of an Oath to a thing which hath no harm in it: And as to the Imposition, that alone cannot alter the Case,

Caſe; For if ſuch a thing (ſuppoſe a ſignificant *Ceremony*) be in it ſelf lawful, then the Magiſtrate by impoſing a ſignificant *Ceremony*, hath only impoſed that which is a lawful thing. The Law is here notoriouſly and confeſſedly innocent in every particular, becauſe that every particular which it doth require, is owned and confeſſed to be innocent.

BUt as for Oaths, we are farther told, *That be they taken, or be they not taken, they ſignifie nothing.*

We live then certainly in a very mad Age. But of all men, the *Presbyterians* are the beſt qualified to teach this Doctrine, *That Oaths, be they taken, or not taken, they ſignifie nothing.* All *Europe* will bear witneſs, that with them they have indeed ſignified nothing.

AND *that, not only becauſe there is no hole whereout a man can creep, that hath taken a former Oath, but he can get out of the ſame, or find another like it, in any new Oath you put upon him*, p. 20.

At this rate, there muſt be no *Oaths* at all, Becauſe too many may be tempted to break them; but I ſhall not make any longer Annotations upon this, becauſe I will not preſume to vie skill with a *Puritan* in what belongs to the ſhifting out of any Oath, eſpecially if it be a lawful one; I ſhall readily acknowledg, that they are, of all others, the moſt experienced Maſters of that Faculty.

BUT in Confirmation of what went before, we are farther told, *That there is nothing that is a mans duty, or unlawful, before he hath taken the Oath, but it remains as it was, after he hath taken it; and he will be obliged neither more nor leſs, (I ſpeak as to the thing, not degree) whether he take it, or not take it.*

The Obligations of *Oaths* is certainly much ſtronger than this Author ſeems here to make it: The thing which was my duty before, if once I become ſworn to it, this is a very ſtrait Bond to tye me faſter to it; my *ſoul* is particularly laid in pawn, and *God Almighty*, beſides a Judg, is a Party to exact the thing in that I have ſworn it: Nay, in unlawful things, the Oath hath a ſad *Obligation*, not to do the thing, it is true; for nothing can bind me to commit a ſin: but alas, by taking this unlawful Oath, I have brought my ſelf into a *neceſſity* of ſinning,

ning, let me take which courſe I can; whether I do the thing it ſelf, or break the Oath whereby I ſwore to do it. If the *Limitation* in the *Parentheſis* (I ſpeak as to the Thing, not Degree) were intended to qualifie the crudeneſs of this (otherwiſe) wild Aſſertion, I am content to let it paſs: I ſhall only add, That if we ſhould grant theſe premiſſes, he could not infer a Concluſion wide enough for his purpoſe, becauſe his enumeration of particulars is very Lame; for, beſides, thoſe things which are Duty abſolutely, and thoſe which are abſolutely Unlawful, there are a ſort of things of a *middle* nature, only Lawful of themſelves, but not *neceſſary*; which before the Oath I might have done, but after the Oath I muſt do; and this part of the Diviſion ought not to have been forgot, becauſe our great Conteſt is concerning theſe things of this *middle* nature.

BUT p. 23, 24, the Propoſet ſpeaks home, *I would to God there had never been an Oath, beſides the Aſſertory Oath*, &c.

Aud p. 25, *Indeed an Oath in civil Things, that is taken of good will, is of moment; but an Oath upon Conſtraint we abhor.*

Sure the Wiſdom of all *Nations* hath been ſtrangely miſtaken, if ſo be, that *Promiſſory* Oaths are not things of very great uſe and Obligation: *Solomon*, among other Reaſons by which he preſſeth Obedience to *Kings*, reckons up this as one, and that not the leaſt conſiderable, in regard of *the Oath of God*. The Examples of this in the Scripture, are very frequent, *David* and *Jonathan*, *David* to *Bathſeba* concerning *Solomon's* Succeſſion, to the *Gibeonites*, with many others: And the indiſpenſable Obligation of ſuch Oaths, is declared *Numb.* 30. v. 2. *If a man vow a Vow, or ſwear an Oath, to bind the ſoul with a bond, he ſhall not break or profane his Word, he ſhall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*

WEll, but this, perhaps if the Oath be taken voluntarily, of our own accord: For, *indeed, an Oath in Civil things, which is taken with a good will, is of moment; but an Oath upon Conſtraint we abhor.*

Then if any will of their own accord ſwear *not to kill the King*, theſe may, but at no hand we muſt not compel them to it. The Scriptures furniſh us with many Examples of impoſed Oaths, by *Moſes*, *Joſua*, *David*, *Aſa*, *Iehoida* and *Nehemiah*, &c. 2 *Chr.* 15. 12. *Aſa* cauſed the people

ple to come to *Jeruſalem*, and there they made a Covenant to ſeek the Lord God of their Fathers; but perhaps the people were every one of them Unanimous, and deſirous to enter into ſuch a Covenant: That is not likely, that there ſhould be ſo immediate, and ſo ſudden a change, ſeeing that v. 3. *they had been for a long ſeaſon without the true God, and without Prieſt to teach, and without the Law*: And v. 13. We ſee a plain, and a very great Coercion uſed, *And whoſoever will not ſeek the Lord God of Iſrael, ſhall be ſlain, whether he were ſmall or great, man, or woman.* Ezra 10 v. 5. *He cauſed the Chief Prieſts, and the Levites, and all Iſrael to ſwear, that they would do according to this word.*

And thus did all the good Kings of *Judah*, as it were eaſie to produce, *impoſe Oaths*, and that too in *Religious* matters: Now there were amongſt them divers certainly of different perſwaſions, who would have been glad to have been exempt from thoſe Oaths, as appears by their ſeveral Groves and High-places (amongſt which, no doubt, there were ſeveral pious and well-meaning, however deluded perſons, who might have ſaid, We worſhip God according to *our Conſciences*, and the beſt of our Light.) But theſe different Lights and Perſwaſions did not hinder thoſe godly, as well as wiſe Magiſtrates, from impoſing ſuch an Oath; but rather it was the grand cauſe or motive of ſuch Impoſitions, to diſcover who they were who were of another Perſwaſion, that they might be obſerved, and care taken of them, that they might be queſtioned, and, if poſſible, in time reduced.

THE next is a rare Reaſon, why there ſhould be never any more Laws made, *Ruit humanum genus per vetitum*; *To command a thing wherein we were before left free, is enough to whet our humane nature unto oppoſition*; *to prohibit it, will make it coveted*, &c.

If people do grow eager after a thing, meerly becauſe there is a Law againſt it, There is but one way to prevent that, and that is, To put the Law in vigorous execution. I muſt confeſs, That a little Reſtraint doth ſometimes whet our appetite; and that the vulgar are ſo filly as to deſire a thing ſometimes meerly becauſe it is forbidden them; and we ſhall readily grant that it is thus in the inſtance he hath given us, That, *if many of the ejected Miniſters who are flockt to now when they venture to preach, had liberty to ſay on till they had wearied themſelves and Auditors out, we ſhould ſee how the rowling Snow-balls would melt, and, excepting a few of the Eminent of them, their Congregations would quickly grow thin enough.*

We

We are eaſily perſwaded, that the people would quickly ſee cauſe to grow weary of them, and do very much wonder what it is which makes them at all flocked after! How ſuch flat, and empty, and wretched Stuff, ſhould ever have the luck to be eſteemed Goſpel-preaching.

PAge 29. *I do verily hope in the Lord, That there is nothing in theſe fears and dreadful abodings of many good mens hearts, about the Diſcipline and way of Worſhip in our Church, but a conceit, the Lord knows, I do not know.*

Is it not therefore very wiſely and Chriſtianly done of the Magiſtrates, to ſilence thoſe Men who make it their great buſineſs to put ſuch fooliſh and odd conceits into the peoples heads, who make them to fear, where you confeſs that no fear is? Are theſe men fit to have the charge of Souls committed to them, who love to keep their Proſelytes all their life-time in Pupillage, under thoſe childiſh and empty terrors, which you properly reſemble to Ghoſts and Goblins? Things which may indeed fright us very much, but it is only becauſe we will not be made to underſtand that there is nothing in them: And whereas we are adviſed, p. 33. *To root out ſuch conceptions*; we muſt ſtill accept our Author's conceſſion, That theſe are conceptions fit to be rooted out; and we think, that if that ſort of Teachers were removed, who nouriſh up ſuch ſilly Apprehenſions, theſe jealouſies, as having no foundation, would in a little time, of their own accord, wear all away.

The next thing conſiderable, is an Argument for *Liberty of Conſcience* upon a Politick Account, That *Liberty of Conſcience* is the thing which always prevails, which ſide ſoever it is of.

*IT was this which got the better of the King in the Warres, pulled down the Biſhops, went along with the Parliament-Army, afterward pulled up the Parliament, and ſate down and reigned with* Cromwel, p. 45.

Is this the chief Art they have to recommend *Liberty of Conſcience* to the King's Affections, to lay before Him how it Murdered His Father, proſcribed Himſelf, and ſate down with the Uſurper on the Royal Throne? Sure this is not intended, as that this was a likely way to endear it to the King, that it has done ſo much againſt Him: It is ſtrange that this ſhould be uſed as an Argument to this King and Parliament,

ment to Eſtabliſh any thing, becauſe it was the thing which Reigned with *Cromwel*, and ſhall *Eternize that Mortal, ibid.* I cannot perſwade my ſelf, that one, who only intended to ſupplicate for Favour, would ever have pleaded ſo unſuitable a Motive: I rather, therefore, conſtrue it as a Tacit Threat: This is that which Liberty of Conſcience is able to Do; and if you will not grant it, you have felt its force once already, and you know not how ſoon you may feel it again. But of all the things which are here ſaid in the behalf of Liberty of Conſcience, I cannot chuſe but ſmile, that it is here ſaid to Reſtore the *King*, p. 46. Surely the Church of *England* may ſay, without Boaſting, That Her Sons were the trueſt, the moſt conſtant Subjects the *King* had: You cannot name any other Party in the Nation, chuſe where you will, but ſomething may be Objected, as to their Deviation from the ſtrict Rules of Loyalty, among the *Nobility, Gentry, Citizens, Countrey-men*; if there were any who were beyond their Neighbours eminently Royaliſts, they were likewiſe noted as eminently Prelatical: Theſe were the men who made every other Government uneaſie, by Diſſenting from, and upon all occaſions Oppoſing of it: All other Denominations ſet up, courted, owned every Uſurping Power, engaged, addreſſed, did what they could to make an Intereſt, vvhile the Epiſcopal Perſwaſion alwayes held off. Theſe were alwayes Praying, Pleading, Plotting for the *King*; when according to your own Confeſſion, the tender Conſciences vvere pliable enough to be bent any way; and your Darling, Liberty of Conſcience, as you are not aſhamed to tell us, made no ſcruple of Conſcience, *to ſit down and Reign with Cromwel.*

But if in *Cromwel's* time, you were one of thoſe who Enjoyed the Liberty of your Conſcience, we are ſure that we could not Enjoy the Liberty of ours: Was not Prelacy, as well as Popery, excepted in the Inſtrument of Government, that Liberty ſhould not Extend to that Perſwaſion? Was not the Reading Common-Prayer a thing then Prohibited? and that under no leſs a Penalty than Deprivation, and ſometimes Deportation for the third Committing ſuch an Offence? An Epiſcopal Divine was then forbidden to Preach, or ſo much as to keep a School. Let us remember the Major Generals, and then we ſhall not forget what kind of Liberty of Conſcience that was *which ſate down, and reigned with Cromwel.* This is, I muſt needs ſay, a bold way of making a Propoſition to the *King*, to tell him of *Eternizing of Cromwel.*

Pag. 47. We here meet with a Query ſo very impertinent to the matter in hand, that I wonder how it was brought in. *The Biſhops, and Deans, and Prebends, he thinks, ſhould not have had the whole profit of their Leaſes, the Arrears might have been left for publick Accounts, and good works.*

In a Diſcourſe which pretends wholly to Peace and Accommodation, I wonder how this comes in, being perfectly Extrinſecal to any thing which they at preſent have any occaſion to plead for, unleſs they have a fancy that they cannot ſerve God now according to their Conſciences, becauſe that the Biſhops, ſeven years ago, were permitted to have the Letting of their own Leaſes.

But if a *Tender Conſcience* be that which is afraid of the very *appearance* of Sin; How comes it to paſs that they are ſo *angry* that the State did not commit Sacriledg? Theſe men cannot be content, if the Church doth ever recover Her own, and be but once, as it were, *expoſtliminio*, reſtored to thoſe Rights which they had once Robbed Her of. Not to mention Merits, or Sufferings, we only ſpeak of the Juſtice of the thing. His *Majeſty's* Piety is indeed for ever to be Celebrated, in being thus the *Church's* Nurſing-Father; it had ſuffered for Him, and He ſcorned that Advice which would have had it to Suffer *by* Him. And as for the *good works* which he fancied that money might have been better employed in, Who ſhall ſecure us, that, ſuppoſe the Church had loſt it, it ſhould have been employed wholly in *good works?* Was not this the very Plea of *Judas, Might not This have been ſold for five hundred pence, and given to the Poor?* How Charitable and Publick-Spirited are theſe men grown upon other mens Purſes!

" Former Sacriledges have been committed upon ſuch plauſible pre-
" tences as the *Publick Benefit* and *Security*; but if we conſult things
" aright, we ſhall not find that the *Publick* ever gained by ſuch courſes,
" nor do we believe that it ever will; nor indeed is it fit that it ſhould
" do ſo. While theſe things continue in the Church, the Publick hath
" a conſiderable Intereſt in them: take them away thence, and you
" raiſe ſome private Families, whoſe turn being now ſerved, the Pub-
" lick hath no influence upon them any longer. Men may talk of the
" Common Good, and pretend that; but no man will be an Inſtrument
" of Sacriledg, without an eye to his *Private* Intereſt. As the Caſe now
" ſtands, How much of the Churches *Revenue* is ſtill payable to the
" *King?* And how much more hath He the *Diſpoſal* of? Now thoſe
" Lands are in the hands of thoſe who are the King's conſtant Depen-
" dants; take them away, and you may give them to thoſe who may
imme-

"immediately turn his *Enemies*; and if we ſhould make an Obſerva-
"tion upon experience, we might perhaps find, that thoſe who have
"enjoyed the ſpoils of the Church, have not alwayes ſhewed them-
"ſelves the firmeſt *Friends* to the *Crown*. But as to that money for
"*Fines*, which the Author ſpeaks only about, we think it was employed
"about very *good works*: Was not the Repairing of the Twenty
"years Loſſes of ſo many Learned, Pious, and Loyal Perſons, of
"it ſelf a very *good work*? The *Repairing of Cathedrals*, and furniſhing
"of them, was a very *good*, and a very *coſtly work*: The *Redemption of*
"*Captives*, was a very *good work*: His *Majeſty's Favour* was moſt
"humbly acknowledged in a large *Benevolence*: The re-building of Hou-
"ſes, and *augmentation of Vicaridges* to eighty pounds *per annum*, was a
"*good*, and a very *great work*. And to theſe let them add, how much was
"abated to the *Tenant*, of that proportion which any *other Landlord*
"would have taken; let us conſider theſe things, I ſay, and we ſhall
"find, the ſummes of money which came really into the pockets of the
"Clergy at that time, not to have been in any proportion near that
"which Envy hath Suggeſted. I ſhall add but one Conſideration
"more, which I did not joyn with the reſt; becauſe, though it was a
"great Loſs and Charge to the Church, I can ſcarce reckon, to have
"been a *good work*; and that was, the Conſideration, which was taken
"of the *Purchaſers*, who of all men had perhaps the leaſt rea-
"ſon to be conſidered; yet ſo generous was the Churches mercy,
"as ſhe did not only forgive, but reward thoſe who had been the Rob-
"bers of, and Spoilers of Her Houſes and her Patrimony.

IN the next place, *p.* 49. *Our Author thinks that the Covenant ought not to have been renounced*, &c. If this care had not been taken, the People might have had ſome temptation to believe, That the State had tacitly confeſſed, that the Covenant had had ſome real Obligation: and if that were once allowed, the whole Foundation of this Propoſition had been utterly removed; ſo great a part of the Nation having (as we have before obſerved) ſworn to bring the Nation to Uniformity, 1. *art.* of the *Cov.*

This might have been a Preſident for a violent Faction, or part of the two Houſes to impoſe an Oath another time; had not that practiſe of theirs been ſo ſolemnly diſclaimed, it might have been then ſaid, that this had been done by them once before, not only without, but againſt the *Kings* Expreſs Command and Authority, and that Act of theirs was not

ſo much as queſtioned; which ſure it would have been, had it not been warrantable; eſpecially ſince all who took the Covenant, have therein ſworn *to defend each other, in the maintaining and purſuing thereof; and that they ſhall not ſuffer themſelves Directly, or Indirectly, &c. to be Divided and withdrawn from this Bleſſed Union, whether to make Defection to the contrary part, o to give our ſelves to a deteſtable Indifferency, or neutrality in this Cauſe, &c. But ſhall all the dayes of our life, zealouſly and conſtantly continue therein againſt all Oppoſition, and promote the ſame according to our Power, againſt all Lets and Impediments whatſoever, &c. See* 6 Art. *of* Cov. The King's Enemies had an Act of Indemnity; but nothing could have ſecured the King's Friends, ſo long as the Covenant was not declared Null; the fourth Article lying as a Bond upon a conſiderable part of the Nation, to bring all them *to Tryal and Condign Puniſhment.*

Now is it at all credible, that any Nation in the World would allow a great part of the People to believe themſelves to continue under the Obligation of an Oath entred into, in the time of, and in the purſuance of a Rebellion; an Oath downright contrary to the ſtanding Laws and Government, and yet not ſo much as call upon them to diſclaim it? No, ſure all wiſe Eſtates would agree to that known ſaying of *Henry* the Fourth, That *He would be ready to make a Peace with any of the Leaguers*, but *he would never make any Peace with the League.*

PAge 54. *There are among the Non-conformiſts, ſober and Godly men, which are to be compounded with; and there are zealous and Giddy, which are to be born with*, &c. But how are we ſure that it will not Diſpleaſe the Former, that we bear with the Later? We do very well remember, that there was a time that themſelves would not have done it, and that they were very angry with thoſe who did Do it. What Compoſition, or what Toleration will ſerve the turn, we know not: But if themſelves will once agree upon it, what it is which will pleaſe them, each and all; they ſhall then know more of Our minds concerning it.

For the Later of theſe ſorts, it is propoſed, *viz.* The zealous and giddy, *That there may be a Liberty granted to theſe People, for Aſſembling according to their Conſciences*; (a rare Contrivance this, that there muſt be Publick Liberty to giddy zeal!) *but their Meeting-places ſhould be open*, (that others may turn giddy, by beholding their giddineſs)

dineſs) *that ſo if they ſpeak any thing againſt the State, there may be ſome ready to bear witneſs of it:* Alas, How eaſie is it to Couch Sedition in words very innocent of themſelves, ſo that the Law ſhall not be able to take advantage over them; and yet the Auditors ſhall very well underſtand their meaning! But if this be not Caution enough, we have one more, *That no man be ſuffered to ſpeak there, who is not Forty years of age, at leaſt Thirty five.* Now theſe two cautions he ſuppoſeth will render Conventicles very harmleſs. And truly we like them only thus far, as they have ſomething of a Rule in them; for the leſſer Liberty they have, the leſſer harm they will do; the more a Conventicle is bound up, the leſs it is it ſelf, and conſequently, the leſs Miſchievous: But we doubt, that this Caution will not be ſufficient; becauſe, when men arrive to thoſe years, they may perhaps be more wary, but not at all the leſs Dangerous. But why may not ſome of thoſe, whom this Rule Excludes, reply upon this Propoſition, That He who makes it, is himſelf a Borderer upon Antichriſt; And that His Feet ſtand upon the very Brink of *Babylon*: He hath in him ſo plain a Tang of an Impoſing-Spirit. Muſt the motions of the Spirit exſpect, till he arrives at Forty? Hath not a man a Conſcience, and that a tender One, till he is Thirty five years old? Muſt precious Gifts wait till we are of ſuch an Age? What is this but a Contrivance of Man, a plain Iſſue of a Carnal Spirit? Liberty of Conſcience ought to be left to its own Liberty, or it cannot poſſibly be called by that Name. Doth the Scripture tie us up to ſuch a year? And who ſhall dare to Impoſe, what Chriſt hath left free? What ever anſwer you would return to ſo wild a Diſcourſe, think upon and try, whether it would not juſtifie the Magiſtrates proceeding altogether as well as your own; you will find, there is a neceſſity of a Rule, and then your great pretence for each private Conſcience, ſtating its own Liberty, is utterly and unavoidably laid aſide and gone.

BUT p. 61. He readily foreſees, that a much greater Latitude than himſelf intends, will be apt to get in at this wide door of *Liberty* of *Conſcience*; and therefore he takes care to ſhut it *againſt the Papiſts.* There is nothing more plain, than that if theſe Arguments of his are valid, they conclude for the Papiſts and the Turk too, If any one of them be a man of *Conſcience*, and that in his Religion he act according to it. *But the Parliament will provide well enough in that matter*, p. 62.

No

No doubt they will, but we are ſure that they cannot poſſibly do it but by doing that which this whole Book is deſigned againſt, *viz.* In impoſing Penalties in matters of Religion, and exacting thoſe Penalties too, although thoſe whom they exact them of, ſhould happen to be really Conſcientious.

PAge 66. We meet with ſome Propoſals to alter divers of our Civil Laws, *As Enfranchiſements of Servile Tenures, enjoyning every one to buy his own Tythe, and the money laid out in glebe, a Regiſter of Eſtates, Tenderneſs toward Conſciences.*

Theſe are fine projects, and if the Author thinks it worth his while, he may deal with thoſe who are moſt concerned in his deſigned alterations; but the firſt of them makes us doubt, that the man may be enclined to be a *Leveller*; and ſo we leave him to the mercy of the Landlords.

But theſe Inventions do delight our Author ſo very much, That he thinks that they alone are ſecurity enough for the Everlaſting Peace of the Nation; and they are enlarged upon, as if the man really thought that there were ſomething in them; For, when things are brought about, as he hath contrived, then there muſt needs for ever after, be amongſt us a calm and a moſt ſetled Peace: For ſaith he, *Where there are no hopes from Innovation, no body will go about to make it; But when a People have all that can be had, &c. then there will be no hopes from an Innovation*; Ergo, *When theſe things are taken into Conſideration, then ſhall our Government of Monarchy in this Land, (leaving the Perſons of our Succeſſive Sovereigns unto Providence and their Chances) be out of danger for future Generations.*

What is here meant by (leaving the Perſons of our Succeſſive Soveraigns unto Providence and their Chances) I wiſh our Author had farther explained himſelf; But as for his contrivance to ſettle things at that paſs, that no body ſhall have hopes from, nor deſire to, an Innovation: I dare ſay that this Gentleman is no States-man, in that he ſuppoſeth ſuch a thing ſo much as poſſible; this thing is only then to be hoped for, when there will be no Ambitious, no Revengeful, no Diſcontented, no Poor, no Miſtaken man in the Nation. There will be always thoſe who wiſh for a Change, becauſe that there will be always thoſe, whoſe preſent condition is not altogether ſo ſplendid as they could wiſh it to be: In the moſt happy Times, ſome will really be, more will fancy themſelves to be, unhappy.

Our

Our Author ſome pages backwards, tells us, That if he is miſtaken in the Argument he there proſecutes, *he will ſhut up his Table-Book, and make no more Obſervations from Experience.* Truly I ſhall even give him leave to do ſo, ſeeing that he hath learnt no more from it, than to believe that Innovators are in earneſt, when they profeſs that they take up Arms only for the common good.

THeſe Propoſals being over, There is a long pitiful Addreſs; the ſumm of all that which it is founded upon, being p. 72. *Do you know that many of theſe things are really againſt mens Conſciences? and would you indeed have any ſuch to do them, though they be ſo?*

If theſe things are really, and in good earneſt againſt their Conſciences, we are ſorry for it, and do not know how to help it, but themſelves do, or when they pleaſe may do ſo: In the mean time, why ſhould not this Author joyn with us, in Condemning thoſe Preachers which infuſe ſuch needleſs jealouſies into the Peoples heads, which himſelf confeſſeth (as we have often obſerved) that there is no real cauſe for? Himſelf confeſſeth that they are not more panick, than empty terrors; he reſembleth them to the fear of *Fairies*, and ſuppoſeth that there is nothing in them. But, Which, now think we, ſhould give place? The publick Law, or the private Conſciences? eſpecially in our Caſe, where the Apologiſt owns the Law as to the matter, to be in the right, and verily believes that the Conſcience as to the ſcruple is in the wrong. But what is now to be done as the Caſe ſtands? The Command is only to a Lawful thing as it hath been often granted, but it is believed to be unlawful: I ſhall anſwer this which is the grand fundamental doubt, out of the words of one of the chief Ring-leaders of that Party, (and for his ſake, I hope they may meet with a fair Reception) Mr. *Baxter* in his Diſputations about Church-Government, *Chap.* 15. *P.* 483. *If we do through Weakneſs or perverſneſs, take Lawful things to be unlawful, that will not excuſe us in our diſobedience, our error is our ſin, and one ſin will not excuſe another ſin;* & paulò poſt, *It is their own erring judgment that intangleth them in a neceſſity of ſinning till it be changed.* with much more to the ſame purpoſe, in that whole Chapter throughout.

But after all this Diſpute, ſuppoſe at the laſt that it ſhold not be Conſcience, and in many of their Leaders, we have great evidence, that it is not ſo. At the conference at *Hampton Court* before King *James*,

Dr.

*Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Knewſtub, Mr. Chatterton*, did clamour as loud about Conſcience as any now do, or can. But when the Arguments upon which their Conſciences pretended to be founded, were to their own Conviction, all weighed and anſwered, there was then deſired an Indulgence for ſome few worthy and ſober men, becauſe of their Credit: And are we ſure, that Credit hath nothing to do in this Caſe? Men are loath to uſe theſe Ceremonies, leſt they ſhould loſe the Credit of that zeal, which hath formerly appeared ſo much againſt them.

BUT *p.* 77. *It is not the ſeverity of Laws that can do any thing with the mind, though it may with the outward man: Force may make men Hypocrites, not Converts, to a Faith which is enjoyned*, &c.

*Timor pœnarum etſi nondum habet bonæ conſcientiæ delectationem ſaltem intra cogitationis coercet malam cupiditatem* Aug. *cont. a literas Petiliani.* Lib. 2. Chap. 83.

To this we anſwer with St. *Auſtin*, If it doth not remove the Error, yet it may prevent its ſpreading. If it doth not utterly take away the Cauſe, yet it hinders moſt of its miſchievous Effects: And in a little time, it may do the other too: Hereſie is not ſeated ſo ſolely and altogether in the Mind, but St. *Paul* thinks fit to rank it among the works of the Fleſh; it hath often-times no ſublimer Motives, than many other of the moſt ſenſual Tranſgreſſions; outward Conſiderations, are very frequently its cauſe, and may ſometimes be its Cure. And this our Author Himſelf aſſures us of, That this is the beſt way to fetch in others, *who certainly will grow weary at the long run, when they ſhall have work provided, but no Benefice, till they Conform*: *One of his own Projects depends* upon this, that the having no Benefice, will be a moſt effectual means to make them in time, willing to Conform. I ſhall only add to this, that theſe are very bold Beggars, who whilſt they are pleading for Indulgence and Moderation, cannot forbear to throw out threatnings. *If the Biſhops will not*, &c. *They may write down in the Books of what ſhall hereafter befall them. Moniti meliora* p. *&c.*

This is ſomething of the Strain of *Martin Junior*, We have ſought to advance this Cauſe of God, by humble ſuit to the *Parliament*, *&c.* Seeing now, the means uſed by Us have not prevailed, if it come in by that means, which will make all your hearts to ake, blame your ſelves. *Bancrof.* out of *Mart.* p. 144. *Dangerous Poſitions* and practiſes.

There is one Conceſſion behind, which we are to thank our Author for, that He ſeems *p.* 86, 87, to hold it unlawful to expect Deliverance from any, but the *King*: We deſire only to know whether all the Party

Party which He pleads for, be of that mind too. Mr. *Hooker* aſſures Us, that your Predeceſſors were of the opinion, That their way was to be ſet up whether Her *Majeſty* or the State will or no. *Hooker Pref.* out of *Martin*, p. 28. and in the *King's* large Declaration, concerning the Tumults in *Scotland*, p. 409. We meet with ſeveral of their poſitions laid down, amongſt which, This is one, *It is Lawful for Subjects to make a Covenant and Combination Without the King, and to enter into a Band of Mutual Defence againſt the King, and all Perſons whatever*; and yet there were Two Acts of Parliament at that time in force, which declared all ſuch contrivances puniſhable with Death.

And we do not at all doubt, but that if we had a mind to it, we could give one conſiderable Inſtance within the Memory of Man, how this whole Party here pleaded for, did unanimouſly, and with great Vigour liſt themſelves apace, did contribute their Perſons, Prayers and Purſes, toward the forming and maintaining of an Army, to ſay no more, not raiſed by the *King*. It doth therefore highly concern theſe People publickly to diſown their Predeceſſors, and their own Principles and Practices, or elſe they cannot expect to be believed in This, ſo ſeemingly Loyal a Conceſſion, *That it is unlawful to expect deliverance from any but the* King.

I do not remember any other paſſage in this Propoſition, to be at all Conſiderable; only one Notion he hath, which is ſcattered up and down his Book, that *Penalties* and Rigour doth but alienate their minds farther from us; whereas Indulgence would work upon their Affections, and by degrees upon their Judgments. Now on the other ſide, we think, and that upon the Grounds of Experience, as well as Reaſon, That there is not good nature enough in them for kind uſage to work upon; of this we ſhall give one, but that ſhall be a moſt convincing Evidence. The *Kings Majeſty*, immediately after his moſt happy Reſtauration, being deſirous to ſatisfie ſo many of all Parties, as did not reſolve for ever to remain unſatisfied, did accordingly give ſo much reſpect to the clamours then made againſt the *Liturgy*, as to order a review of it. But withal did, by his Declaration ſet forth about that affair, deſire, that ſo many of Them as would be thought Conſcientious, or peaceable, would in the mean time read *ſo much* of the *Liturgy*, as themſelves had no Exception againſt: an eaſie requeſt one would think; Read only ſo much as you have no Exception againſt: Here Conſcience ſure could not be pretended, when their own Conſcience (nay their very jealouſie) was the only Rule which was ſet Them to walk by, yet they ſtood it out, only becauſe there was no danger in ſtand-

ing: out and after all, the Act of Uniformity brought many of the fiercest to read the whole of that, of which before they could not be brought to read a syllable; so much is a *Law* more available than an *Indulgence*: And as many did come in that *Bartholomew-tide*, so (had there not been so great expectation of a Toleration) we have reason to believe, that many more would have come in.

WE have now Considered every passage in this Treatise, which seems to be any way Material; and must take leave to profess that we are not able to guess what it is which this Author really would have; and we farther believe, that he himself cannot tell us: Nor need we desire the Laws to continue in force any longer, than till the Tender Consciences can agree what to have in the stead of them. The Penner seems in one place, to be one of the most Moderate, and not to desire the removal of our present Constitutions, but only a temporary Indulgence toward some Persons, whom he thinks very well of, as being in his Opinion, men sober in their Judgments and in their Lives, only they have got some odd Jealousies in their Heads; which though the *Apologist* is verily perswaded, *that they have nothing in them*; yet he would have the men born with, as being otherwise good men; and besides he thinks, that by this means there is great hopes, that Liberty, and Custom may in time prevail over these acknowledgedly groundless fancies. This is his sense, *p.* 18. 29. 74. *&c.* But a Law, with an Indulgence annexed to it, is *felo de se*: It may something be resembled to *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, whose feet were partly Iron, and partly Clay: (*i. e.*) as *Daniel* there interprets it, such a Kingdom shall partly be strong and partly broken; and as it is there said that the Iron shall not mix with the Clay, so it will be here, the *Conformists* and *Non-conformists* shall never care to joyn, or be heartily brought to love one another: the difference of Judgment doth unavoidably slide into distance of affection, and from the profession, we are naturally brought to mislike the Persons who are of it.

Besides to Relax a Law upon the account of Conscience, or the pretences of a higher degree of Purity in the same Religion, is as much as to Proclaim the Dissenters, to be the most really Conscientious: That those who do Conform, are meer Formalists, Time-servers, compliers with that which is uppermost; but the *Non-conformists* shall be taken for the Sincere men, who walk according to Light, and to keep the Gospel pure without the mixture of humane Inventions: And this alone will be a very great Temptation to many an honest, but weak man,

man, who hath more Zeal than knowledg, to Enrol himself among those Men, who are allowed to differ from the Religion of the State upon the pretence of higher Purity, and greater attainments.

But because that this Proposal pretends to be made very much upon hopes; that by this means, the differences will in a short time, be brought to cease of their own accord: We desire therefore to Know, how long he would have this time of Tryal last; or will he yield, that if this course doth fail, as to this promised effect, that after such a time is past, we shall have recourse to our old Laws again; and for the present, I wish it were Stated now, how far he would have this Indulgence reach: And that we knew certainly, what were *a tender Conscience*. Shall it be sufficient to pretend a Scruple at the Law? or is there any other Rule to know this by? Or must we believe every one who saith, he doth scruple it: St. *Peter* says, *There be some who speak Lies in Hypocrisie, because of advantage*: Who now shall distinguish, unless there be some other Judge, beside the party concerning whom this question may arise? I desire farther to know, whether this pretence shall reach absolutely and universally to all sorts of Consciences, and all manner of pretences of them, or else Limitedly, and Restrainedly to such a sort or number of them. And we would fain know certainly, what those sorts, kinds and numbers are. Let our Author pitch upon which of these two Members of the Division he pleaseth, and then try if with either of them, he can bring his whole Party to subscribe: This we all desire to have, and thus much we will be content with; we are sure that the Sectaries will not be content with one; and we are sure that the time was, when the *Presbyterian*, would not endure the other; And this very Author seems much Divided in the Points; one while, he seems only for an accommodation between Us and the sober Protestant, by which soft phrase he understands the *Presbyterians*, and while he is in this mood, he explodes the wildness of the Sectary, and compares *him and the Papist to the upper and nether Jaw of Destruction, opening her Mouth upon Us*, p. 7.

But in another place, he is plainly of another mind, pleading earnestly and openly for that *Liberty of Conscience, which sate down and Reigned with* Cromwel, *p.* 45. and that we know was down-right Sectarism; now it is but reasonable for us to demand, which of these two Pleas he would stick to; both he cannot have, because they are Inconsistent, and if the Law would consent, yet these two distant Pleas will not, cannot agree, but must necessarily overthrow each other.

It highly concerns all those who are for making Alterations in Laws

and Governments, to consider what it is they are about, and whether their present contrivances are like to carry them, lest they unawares bring things to such a pass, which themselves will be most sorry to see them at. Of all Projects, Innovation doth most often fail the hopes conceived of it, The Beginners being frequently ashamed before they come half way to the end; and it must needs always be so, because such a work is not to be carried on, but by great multitudes of several Interests and Inclinations; the greatest part of which must necessarily be disappointed, and consequently discontented, and so many unforeseen accidents do perpetually arise, in a business of this nature; new people and new principles coming every day in Play, that the First beginnings are become utterly at a Loss, they are immediatly out-gone and presently after laid aside. But not to carry this observation farther than our present business, the *Presbyterians* and the *Sectaries*, however they may joyn now in the making of this Proposition, let it be but once granted, and they shall immediately differ upon the nature and bounds of it: late experience hath given us abundant Evidence, that neither of these, have reason to trust one another: The one only meaning to change us into another sort of Government: The latter, not enduring any such thing: All *Europe* is witness, that nothing but the fear of a common Enemy, or a common Force over them, is able to keep *the Godly of all Judgments* from running foul one upon another.

If we should now aska *Presbyterian*, if he would be willing to be accounted accessary to the infinite number of Heresies, Schisms and Scandals which will immediatly, and unavoidably arise, if every one be left to walk according to their own Light and Conscience, he will answer, Far be it from him, to be guilty of so horrid a thing, he hath Covenanted, Preached, Written, bore Testimony against, so sinful and Intolerable a Toleration. And on the other hand, go to the *Sectary* and ask him, Is this your meaning, only to change our Form of Government, for another you like better of? he will answer, no by no means: They are all alike of humane Invention, and so alike blameable; besides, they will abhor to be oppressed by those of their own Party, while they Act but in pursuance of their common Principle; and this you shall have more fully, in the words of the common Champion and Patron of them, both about this very Argument and concerning the *Presbyterians*, *Had not they* (*viz.* the Presb.) *laboured but lately under the weight of Persecution? and was it for them to sit heavy upon others? Is it Ingenuous to ask Liberty, and to give it? what greater Hypocrisie than*

for

*for those who were oppressed by the* Bishops, *to become the greatest oppressors themselves, so soon as the Yoak was removed?* Oliver Cromwel *in his Speech at the Dissolution of one of his Parliaments*, 1654. p. 18. These therefore, however they may now piece up into one, are really two Parties, have Designs absolutely inconsistent; that which soever prevailes, the other is like to have little joy of it.

But as it is Evident, that neither of these will *Tolerate* each other; so there is no reason, why the Magistrate should *Tolerate* either of them: And first, For the *Presbyterian*; the reason is clear, because he will *Tolerate* no body else, as appears plainly by the Covenant: and if you will have one shameful Instance of their Rigour, remember how they had the face to deny to that *Royal Martyr* our late Soveraign of Blessed Memory, the *attendance of his own Chaplains*; He must make use of their way of Devotion, or by their Consent, He must have none at all; give me such another Instance of Barbarity, and seek it where you can.

After this, it is needless sure to give you another Instance of their rigour, indeed of their Inhumanity; but yet we must do it, to shew their constant temper. Deposing of Kings comes but seldom, therefore we shall see what private men are to expect from them; *They have refused to admit to the Communion, or to pray for people lying on their Death-bed, only for not taking the Covenant; have declared that all Non-subscribers were Atheists*: These mild inoffensive people, who must be dealt so tenderly with, because of their weakness, have preached it publickly, *That Episcopacy must not only be pulled up, but the Bishops must be hanged up before the Lord, and that the bloodiest and sharpest War was to be endured, rather than the least error in Doctrine, or in Discipline.* See the large Declaration concerning the *Scots*, p. 404.

And how the Magistrate is particularly concerned to reduce these men to order, appears from the Insolencies they have committed and defended against him, when they have been cited to appear before the King and His Council, for some of these seditious Preachments; *i. e.* "Being commanded to appear before the King and Council, they refused with a disdainful kind of contempt, alledging that *Pulpits were exempt from the Authority of Kings and Ecclesiastical Persons*, were subject not to the Authority of the Prince, but to the Presbytery. *Cambden Eliz.* p. 361.

*Coram compa-rere jussi fastidioso quodam contemptu abnuerunt, quasi Pulpita à Regum Auctoritate essent exempta; & Ecclesiastici non principis Imperio sed Presbyterio subessent.*

And

And amongſt other, this was plainly averred in the Caſe of Mr. *Andrew Melvin*, who being cited before the King and His Council, declined their judgment, affirming that *what was ſpoken in the Pulpit, ought firſt to be tryed by the Presbytery, and neither King nor Council might* in prima inſtantia *meddle therewith, though the Speeches were Treaſonable.* Spotſwood, p. 330.

But that a King is concerned as much as his Royalty is worth, to provide againſt theſe men, will appear by ſixteen of their publick and owned *Poſitions*, all to be met with in the forementioned *Kings* great *Declaration*, concerning *Scottiſh* Tumults, 407 &c. of which we ſingle out theſe. 7*th* poſ. *The Aſſembly is independent, either from King or Parliament in matters Eccleſiaſtical.* poſ. 9*th* *It is lawful for Subjects to make a Covenant and Combination without the King, and to enter into a Bond of Mutual Defence againſt the King and all Perſons Whatſoever.* poſ. 11*th*. *If Subjects be called before the King and Council for any miſdemeanour, If they who are called, do any way conceive that the matter for which they are called, doth concern the Glory of God, or the good of the Church, then they may appeal from the King and Council to the next General Aſſembly and Parliament; and in the mean time before their appeals are heard or diſcuſſed, they may diſobey the King and Council.* poſ. 12. *That when the King is intreated to indict a General Aſſembly, it is not that there is any need of his indiction, but rather to do him honour, and to beget countenance to their proceedings.* poſ. 14. *An Aſſembly may abrogate Acts of Parliament, and diſcharging Subjects of their obedience to them, if they any way reflect on the buſineſs of the Church.* poſ. 15. *The proteſtation of Subjects againſt Laws eſtabliſhed, whether it be made* Coram Judice, *or* Non Judice, *before the Judges or the People, doth void all obedience to thoſe Laws, and diſchargeth all the Proteſtors from any Obligation to live under them, before ever thoſe Proteſtations and the validity of them ſhall come to be diſcuſſed before the Competent Judges of them, nay, although they be repelled by the Judge, before whom they were made.* And this they taught their Proſelytes to do often in the Market-place, and ſo they diſcharged themſelves and one another from any Law as often as they pleaſed. poſ. 16. *A number of men being the greater part of the Kingdom, may do any thing which they themſelves conceive to be conducing to the Glory of God, and the good of the Church, notwithſtanding any Laws ſtanding in force to the contrary*, p. 413. large Declaration.

Having now done with theſe, the toleration of the Sects will I hope be diſpatched eaſily. The Mother Sect being laid aſide, the leſſer under ones

ones will not hope to ſtay behind: And ſurely if the Magiſtrate love Religion or himſelf, he will not be perſwaded to tolerate theſe neither. Firſt, for Religion, who ſeeth not that this Artifice makes Religion weak and deſpicable by the being crumbled into ſo many pieces? it renders it moſt ridiculous by being ſo expoſed to all ſorts of dotage and impoſture. What can poſſibly give unbelievers a more juſt and frequent occaſion of ſcorn than this, that every one who hath but a freak in his brain, ſhall have free liberty if he pleaſeth, to Chriſten it a motion of Spirit? when every thing that is moſt extravagant, may have Licence at pleaſure to recommend it ſelf *as a degree of farther Light*. Here we ſhall ſee men *ſhaking* all day, as if the Spirit came to them in Convulſions; there we ſhall ſee them run naked about the Streets as if with the Old Man they had put off all degrees of Modeſty. But theſe things cannot perfectly be deſcribed, becauſe they may vary every moment, no man living being able to tell how many more abſurdities this may come to in the very next moment. Whether the Sects be fit to be tolerated, can only then be reaſonably determined, when we are certain how many, and what they are. And as to the outward part of the Magiſtrates care in this buſineſs, who ſhall ſecure us, that this Liberty of Conſcience may not in a while be pleaded for, as to *moral tranſgreſſions*? alſo according as the Light doth farther encreaſe upon them, *Quid quod de furtis quoq; & adulteriis & homicidiis inter Anabaptiſtas & Libertinos Quæritur an ſcelera ſint? Beza de Hæreticis à Magiſtratu puniendis*; p. 118. What a pitiful reſtraint *is a Law* to a man who hath *a Viſion*? tell him of an Act of *Parliament*, he comes full fraught with the *mind of God*; nay, what ſhall the moſt expreſs precept in all the Scripture ſignifie to one who is got *above* the *diſpenſation* of the *Letter*? Let us remember the *Anabaptiſts* in *Germany*, no men meeker at firſt, none bloodier at laſt. *Sleiden. Lib.* 10. p. 247.

Now that the *Magiſtrate* will find himſelf to be highly concern'd what *opinions* any numbers of men ſhall once come to profeſs in his *Dominions*. is hence evident, becauſe that *Opinions* have a very great influence upon *Actions*: He who is allowed to raiſe a Sect, hath a very fair opportunity put into his hands of making himſelf Head of ſuch a Party, and by being permitted to have their Conſciences, he will find it no hard matter, to have their *Perſons* and their *Purſes* at his own diſpoſal too. Hence it is, though ſome Princes have been ſometimes forced to ſuffer diſſenters from the Eſtabliſhed Profeſſion; (by reaſon that they were ſo numerous, or ſo ſubtle, that they could not go about to ſuppreſs them without diſcovering how unable they were to do ſo) yet they always looked upon

on ſuch *Diſſenters*, as the next door to *Enemies*; and accordingly had perpetual eye and guard upon them, as thoſe who were of all other the moſt likely to be the Authors, or occaſion of the next diſturbance. It is a great miſtake, to imagine that Sects are things to be deſpiſed, becauſe that men of Parts and Breeding are not eaſily nor uſually the firſt which are ſeduced by them; we ſhall grant that its beginning, nay, and its greateſt growth are amongſt the meaneſt people, thoſe whoſe fortunes are low as their underſtandings; but perhaps it may not end there neither; but like a *Peſtilence* which may begin in an obſcure Alley, and yet in a while no part of the City or Kingdom may be free from it: Beſides, are not the vulgar People the Hands and Inſtruments which the greateſt muſt always make uſe of? and a Deception got amongſt them, may by a little Connivance multiply ſo faſt, as to be able to diſpute for Superiority, and inſtead of longer *demanding* an *Indulgence*, they may in a little time refuſe to *give* one; and by how much the ordinary ſorts of People are leſs maſters of Reaſon, by ſo much the eaſier may they be ſet on in thoſe courſes, which are abſolutely unreaſonable.

The ſafety of all Governments doth Depend upon This, That it is certainly ſtronger than each ſingle Perſon; and for all ſorts of Unions and Joyning Heads and Forces together, that There be no ſuch Things, but under the Guidance of the Magiſtrate, and by His appointment: And then be the Diſcontented Perſons never ſo many, yet ſo long as They have *no* way of *Uniting*, They are but ſo many ſingle Perſons, Scattered, Weak and Inſignificant, having no means of any Common Councel, They can never joyn in any Common Deſign. But let them once have any one *Phraſe*, to know one Another by, any *ſetled Place* for their conſtant Meetings, and a Set and *Known* Company for Them to Meet with; or any Bond whatever, which doth Unite Them, and They preſently become a *Diſtinct People* and begin to be Dangerous, as having an Intereſt and Counſels of their own, which the Government is not the Manager of, nor Privy to; but ſhall quickly find it ſelf highly concern'd by all means to provide againſt. And this is the Foundation of that advice which *Mæcenas* gave to *Auguſtus*, At no hand to endure Thoſe who attempted to bring in *new* ſtrange *Worſhips* into the State, *Dion. Caſſ.* Lib. 56. *l.* 1, 52. *p.* 561. *in Edit. Steph.* For from thence

*ſaith*,

faith be proceed. * Some Confederations, Conſpiracies, and Aſſociations, things certainly which the Government had need to be much aware off. And it is a very vain thing to Imagine, that thoſe who profeſs ſuch great niceneſs of Conſcience, whatever their opinions be, they will uſe none but lawful wayes to promote them: It is rather true, that they will reckon all wayes lawful, by which it is poſſible, that they may promote them.

Let it once be permitted to crafty, active and talking men, to Inſtill into the minds of all ſorts of people the neceſſity, uſefulneſs, or the rare excellency of any one thing, or Contrivance whatever beyond all that which the preſent Laws and eſtabliſhment doth provide for: and is not here a moſt readily prepared matter for any bold *Bonteſeu* to work upon, who will take upon him to help the Nation immediatly to this ſo fine a thing: Hath not any ſuch undertaker, a vaſt and already formed party in all parts of the Nation? Let him but repreſent it to them, that the preſent Government is the only rub which is in their way between them and this their ſo fancied happineſs, and what will be a conſequent reſolution; but let us remove that obſtacle, ſo publick a good is much to be preferred ſure before any particular form or family, the welfare of the Nation is the great End, and Governors themſelves were created but in order to that, and conſequently are to ceaſe as often as that End can be better attained without them.

Though the pretence be nothing but *Conſcience*, yet every diſcontent will joyn to make the cry moſt loud and general. *Schiſmes* do of themſelves naturally grow into Parties, and beſides are moſt plauſible occaſions for any elſe to joyn unto them. The *gathered* Churches are moſt excellent materials to raiſe new *Troops* out of: and when they are thus far prepared they are at the ſervice of any one who will attempt to lead them on.

If *All* men were Wiſe and Honeſt, if every one underſtood well and would act accordingly, it were then perhaps reaſonable enough to leave things clearly to Conſcience, as the very beſt Rule we could poſſibly think of: But let us adde, that if this would ſuperſede the neceſſity of the coercive power of our Laws in Religious matters, it would do this much more in all civil Ones: For no Laws, which ever were or can be in the world, can provide in any degree for thoſe large meaſures of Juſtice, Equity and Fair dealing, which would infallibly everywhere be to be met with, if we were ſure that men would alwayes have a care to keep a good Conſcience: Truth, Juſtice, Temperance, &c. are things which every mans Conſcience doth, and muſt needs tell him

* Τὸ μὲν θεῖον πάντα πάντως ἀνατίς τι οἶδε κρατεῖ τῶν τοιούτων ἢ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀνελέγκτως τὰς ἀληθείας ζητούντων τὸ παρὸν ἀεὶ τὸ μέλλον ἢ μόνον ἢ πλεῖστα μὲν μόνα τοῦ θείου ὄντος, ὃ τελεσφορούντος ἀεὶ δ' ἄλλα ἄλλοτε πρὸς ἀφορμὴν ἀπὸ ἧς κρίνει τινὰ διαμένοντα ἐπιτηδείως ἀναπεφυκότα ἀπαραίτητα κρίνεται ἀνατρεπόμενα καὶ συναμφότερα ἢ συνεστῶτα ἑκατέρου τὸ γίγνεσθαι ἄπτεσθαι μεταχείρισις συμβῆναι. Mæcenatis oratio apud Dionem. Caſſ. l. 52. p. 561. in Editione Steph.

are his Duty. Yet were it not for the fear of *Laws* we ſhould find that Conſcience is not *alone* to be truſted, even in theſe things which are her Natural, her moſt familiar Objects. And if we ſee that ſhe doth daily prævaricate in theſe plain and obvious things where ſhe is ſo eaſily found out; we have no great cauſe to truſt to her fidelity: that ſhe will not alſo diſſemble in thoſe things which are more remote and obſcure, and hidden ſo far from the beſt of our diſcovery. Let thoſe therefore who plead for *Liberty* of *Conſcience* conſider, that there are *Two ſorts* of men which ought to be provided againſt, to keep this Contrivance of theirs from being abſolutely the moſt ſenſeleſs and dangerous in the whole World: and we profeſs our ſelves unable upon their grounds to provide againſt them, *viz.* Thoſe who do *pretend* Conſcience; and thoſe who *abuſe* it. And there is a *Third* ſort likewiſe which ſome care ought to be taken of, *viz.* Thoſe *vaſt* numbers which are every day ſtill lyable to be more and more abuſed by ſuch Pretences. Thoſe Laws are not fitted for the Temper of this World, which proceed upon this Suppoſition, That every one who looks demurely is preſently in good earneſt, That men ſay nothing but what they think. Let us conſider, that it is very poſſible for men to Perſonate, and then we ſhall not be ſo eager to deſire a general licence for every one who hath a mind to become a publick Cheat.

The *Inconveniences* likewiſe, which ſuch a *Toleration* will bring upon a *Temporal* account, will be very great and very *Univerſal*: not a City, not a Pariſh, nay perhaps not a Family free from them. And we ſhall quickly ſee what a ſad paſs things will come at, if the unconſidering part of mankind ſhall ly thus expoſed to every one who will go about to deceive them.

And then from theſe diverſities of Judgments, and many times when it is only *different* forms of ſpeaking, there will immediately ariſe great diſtances of affection: for theſe *diviſions* of Reuben *there will* preſently *be great thoughts of Heart*, Surmiſings, Cenſures, Jealouſies, Railings, Evil-ſpeakings, Animoſities, Peeviſhneſs, Malice, perverſe Diſputings, and every evil way, each Congregation will have ſome one little Propoſition, which all its Proſelytes muſt be known by, which all their thoughts muſt be always running upon, and every body elſe muſt needs come up too. The ſmalleſt gathered Church cannot hold its Members together, unleſs it hath ſome particular thing to engage them upon, and to have them known by: For they cannot with any face ſeparate from all Mankind, but they muſt have ſomething to ſay for it.

This Contrivance, however it be abſurd and dangerous, will notwith-

withſtanding that, have alwayes many who will be very fond of it, for it is a moſt ready way for every forward fellow to think himſelf ſomewhat in that he is got into ſuch a Sect; and then he thinks, that if he can but improve the notion a little farther, he ſhall then be the more taken notice of: and if he finds that his Addition is but a little taking, he will then forſake his Maſters to ſet up for himſelf; divide from that Church of which he is now ſo precious a Member, to gather a purer of his own: And ſo this *Light* will ſerve moſt bravely for himſelf to ſhine in.

But if this had been a new Invention, its Contrivers might then have been allowed to have entertained huge hopes of it, but alas, it hath been often tryed and always brought great confuſion along with it: and therefore there was then great care taken by the *Romans*, what Religion their ſubjects were of, one of the aneienteſt Laws we read of, *Separatim nemo habeſſit Deos, neve novos, ſed nè advenas niſi publicè adſcitos privatim colanto.* Tul. l. 2. de legibus. XII TABLES. This was an eſpecial part of *Ædiles* care. *Ne qui niſi Romano Dii, neque alio more quam patrio colerentur*, *Liv. lib.* 4. *p.* 155. Eaſily concluding that as ſoon as ever they had another Religion, their Countrey had loſt the better half of them. In variety of worſhip the one muſt needs reckon the other Erroneous, perhaps Impious; and then how lamentably muſt that City be divided, whoſe Inhabitants think themſelves bound as they love God to hate one another: and it hath been often ſeen that a common enemy hath crept in at their inteſtine diviſions, and deſtroyed both; while the one did not enough care to help the other.

Be our Apprehenſions concerning Divine matters never ſo different, I grant that we ought not for the ſake of them to want the dutyes of common humanity; we ſhall grant that ſo to do, is a great error. But alas! it is too general a one; and law-makers are to conſider not only what men ought, but what they uſe to do. Why ſhall I fight (ſaith one) for a Prince who is an Idolater? And why ſhould I (ſaith another) take any care to relieve that City which is only a Bundle of Schiſmaticks? And what was the policy of *Jeroboams calves* think we but this? He did not caſt of the true God, but only ſet up another way of Worſhip, as eaſily concluding, that if I can but perſwade them to be of another religion, I ſhall eaſily keep them to be another Kingdom; do but divide their Faiths, and the Nations will never care to unite again.

And pray tell me, what ſhall a *Prince* do in that caſe, where there are divers wayes of *Worſhip* allowed, and frequented in the ſame Nation? Shall he diſcountenance the profeſſors of any one, by keeping them out of

all Office and Employment? If ſo, he diſobligeth that whole Profeſſion, loſeth ſo many hearts, who ſure will think themſelves to be very hardly dealt with in that they are diſreſpected, only out of their Zeal to God, and becauſe they follow the *beſt of their Light*. And what will they think of ſuch a State, which doth refuſe to employ them merely upon this account, becauſe (in the words of our Author) they uſe all manner of means to ſave their Souls? Or *ſecondly*, ſhall the Prince carry himſelf equally and indifferently toward all Perſwaſions, countenance and prefer them all alike? This can hardly be, becauſe he himſelf muſt be of ſome *One*, and that will think it ſelf not fairly dealt with if it hath not ſome preheminence; And when he endeavours to ſhew himſelf indifferent to all perſwaſions, it will then be ſaid, that he makes uſe of all Religions for his own Ends, but himſelf really is of none; and ſo perhaps none of them will be really for him: And thus by endeavoring to diſpleaſe neither party, he ſhall certainly diſpleaſe them both; at leaſt the Zealots of all ſides will repreſent him at the beſt as one Lukewarm, and ſo only fit (as it is in the *Revel.*) *to be ſpit out at their Mouths*.

Men may talk of their fine projects as long as they pleaſe, but ſurely where the Church is already ſo ſetled, as that it hath a great dependance on the Government, and the Government hath a ſtanding influence upon that; thoſe Politicks muſt needs be very ſtrange which go about to alter ſuch a Conſtitution, and inſtead of a Clergy thus regulated, it is no kindneſs ſure to the *Monarchy* to ſet up ſuch a Miniſtry which ſhall depend chiefly upon the *People*. And when the whole method of the Preachers maintenance, and reputation, muſt be the various Arts, by which he can either guide or follow the ſeveral humours of each of his Congregation; No man can tell what it is poſſible for a good Crafts-maſter to perſwade the multitude unto.

As to our particular caſe, if theſe People, what this book pleads for, had barely a *Toleration*, I do not know that it would ſatisfy them; I ſuſpect it may increaſe their number, and ſo enable them in a while to demand much more, and when they are a little ſtronger, their way would appear not only true but abſolutely neceſſary. *vid. Bancrof.* dangerous *poſitions*, and practices. *pag.* 108.

For however they do now ſpeak us fair, and tell us, that the things impoſed are all lawful, and all that they deſire is, that ſome perſons may in pity be borne with who do not think them to be lawful, yet we ſhrewdly ſuſpect that they teach their Proſelytes much *otherwiſe*; for the people as long as ever they have been under theſe mens Tutourage,

are

are not yet altogether ſo mad, as to make ſo great and withal ſo needleſs a ſeparation: If their Teachers would but let them know ſo much, that theſe things are all lawful, which all this clamour and ſcruple is made about; they would never I ſay, be perſwaded to have all theſe heart-burnings and jealouſies, to fight and make parties againſt that Church, which in theſe its chiefeſt adverſaryes eſteems, held or practiſed nothing which was at all blame-worthy, any otherwiſe than as its Diſſenters by miſtake conceived it to be ſo. No certainly, the poor people are without doubt ſtill led on with thoſe obſolete and forſaken pleas of *Popery*, *Superſtition*, *Will-Worſhip*, and *Idolatry*, which though their Teachers know, and here confeſs to be nothing, yet I doubt they will not let their Diſciples know ſo much: they are perſwaded that we are *Idolaters*, and have been more than once animated to execute the rigor of *Moſes* his Law upon us for it: and when the next opportunity offers it ſelf, we ſhall be called *Babylon* once more, and then the conſequent will be as formerly, *Happy ſhall he be who taketh thy Children and daſheth them againſt the ſtones.*

In one word then, to allow this pretence of Conſcience is no way prudent, becauſe there is no probability that it can produce any good effect: It is a thing, of which you ſhall never be able to ſee a good end. *Toleration* then upon the whole matter is very unneceſſary at this time, becauſe the Impoſitions in the Apologiſts own Judgment are very lawful, it is very unſafe, becauſe we know not how great Evils it may produce; we have ſhewed, that they will not tolerate each other, and that the Magiſtrate hath no reaſon to tolerate either of them, it brings great ſcandals upon Religion, and muſt needs breed great quarrels in the State. And laſtly, If it were granted, themſelves are not yet agreed about its Nature and Bounds, and ſo if we ſhould at preſent give it, they would as yet be at a very great loſs what to do with it. Let us then be permitted to continue as we are, ſeeing it is not agreed in what manner we ſhall be altered, and the Alterations propoſed by this Author have been demonſtrated to be dangerous to the Religion and to the government of the Kingdom.

A Diſcourſe of the Religion of *England* aſſerting, that *Reformed* Chriſtianity ſetled in *ITS DUE LATITUDE* is the ſtability & advancement of the Kingdom. *Lately printed.*

*There was another* TREATISE *lately* Publiſhed *concerning the* due Latitude *of* Religion, *that Author is likewiſe concerned to fix his own Latitude, and let us know how much it is; that he and his whole Party will be content with,*

*I shall make no present observations upon him, but only lay down* two *of his own* Concessions *by which he hath clearly given up his whole Cause.*

*The first is,* p. 28. Such is the complicated condition of humane affairs, that it is exceeding difficult to devise a Rule or Model that shal provide for all whom Equity will plead for. Therefore the Prudent and Sober will acquiesce in any Constitution, that is in some good sort proportionable to the Ends of Government. *If so, they are in this Authors judgment neither Prudent nor Sober men, who call so loud for a* Toleration.

*The second is,* p. 38. Nevertheless, if when all is said, some dissatisfaction doth invincibly possess the judgment, In that case, Christian Humility, and Charity as well as Discretion, adviseth such Persons to acquiesce in their private Security and Freedom, and not to reach after that Liberty, that may unsettle the Publick Order, and undermine the common Safety. *If so, those men want Humility, Charity and Discretion, who demand a publick Liberty for their Consciences,*

*We take these few Lines to be a sufficient answer to all the Rest, and they are so plain, as that I shall not need to Comment upon Them.*

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*FINIS.*